Investigación Pedagógica

Technological devices for developing the oral communicative competence in the English language

Dispositivos tecnológicos para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa oral en lengua inglesa

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ABSTRACT

Background: The use of technologies for developing the oral communicative competence in the English language constitutes an effective tool for the communicative exchange among people supported by the benefits of using the technological devices in the foreign languages students' initial training process.

Objective: To implement didactic procedures for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language through the efficient use of technological devices.

Methodology: A pre-experiment was applied from September 2018 to July 2019 in Foreign Languages Major from José Martí University. The sample was composed of 18 students from first year class. Six professors participated in the research process, who taught Integrated English Practice I and II subjects.

Results: The initial diagnosis confirmed the low level of the proposed indicators and an insufficient integration of the technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language. The implemented didactic procedures were effective; the results were corroborated in the final stage of the research process.

Conclusions: The integration of the technological devices on Integrated English Practice I and II courses contributed to the efficient development of the oral communicative competence in the English language.

MeSH: COMMUNICATION BARRIERS; EDUCATION HIGHER; COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION/methods; LINGUISTICS/methods; LINGUISTICS/education; STUDENTS.

Keywords: Higher education; English language; oral communicative competence; technological devices; communication barriers; competency-based education and methods; linguistics and methods; linguistics and education; students.

RESUMEN

Fundamento: El uso de las tecnologías para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa oral en lengua inglesa constituye un efectivo medio que favorece el intercambio comunicativo a partir de los beneficios del empleo de dispositivos tecnológicos en el proceso de formación inicial de estudiantes de Lenguas Extranjeras.

Objetivo: Implementar procedimientos didácticos para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa oral en lengua inglesa a través del uso de dispositivos tecnológicos.

Metodología: Se realizó un pre experimento a 18 estudiantes del 1.er año de la carrera Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad José Martí en el período de septiembre 2018 a julio 2019, participaron 6 profesores que impartieron las asignaturas Práctica Integral de la Lengua Inglesa I y II.

Resultados: En el diagnóstico inicial se observó en los estudiantes bajo nivel en los indicadores planteados e insuficiente integración de dispositivos tecnológicos en las clases de Práctica Integral de la lengua Inglesa I y II como vía para contribuir al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa oral. Los procedimientos didácticos implementados fueron efectivos, lo que se constató en el diagnóstico final.

Conclusiones: La integración de dispositivos tecnológicos en las asignaturas Práctica Integral de la Lengua Inglesa I y II contribuyó al desarrollo eficiente de la competencia comunicativa oral en esta lengua extranjera.

DeCS: BARRERAS DE COMUNICACIÓN; EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR; EDUCACIÓN BASADA EN COMPETENCIAS/métodos; LINGÜÍSTICA/métodos; LINGÜÍSTICA/educación; ESTUDIANTES.

Palabras clave: Educación superior; lengua inglesa; competencia comunicativa oral; dispositivos tecnológicos; barreras de comunicación; educación basada en competencias y métodos; lingüística y métodos; lingüística y educación; estudiantes.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 21st century the range of technological devices available in the English language teaching was very diverse. It has increased due to the evolution of technology itself and it has become essential to the language practice. However, digital tools, have long been a feature of the world of education and particularly language education. [1] These technological devices are significant sources for getting relevant results in teaching and developing the oral communicative competence in the English Language.

In very recent times, it has been also seen a growth of overview articles in journals that address these very specific matters. During the last few years, with increasingly more sophisticated multimedia technology, there is renewed interest in the complementary relationship of visual and auditory channels for developing the oral communicative competence in the English language.

Multimedia applications for foreign language learning can provide a more realistic picture of the new language and culture in and outside of the English language classroom, including not only linguistic but also paralinguistic features such as body language, gestures and prosody which help to convey meaning to the learners.

In Cuba Higher Education has not been far from the world wide variations regarding the use of technologies in the teaching-learning processes at universities where significant changes related to the students' formation process has being taking place, the main objective lays on the preparation of future professionals for the improvement of the Cuban social project. [2]

Therefore, professors from these institutions have the task to prepare students to fulfill the objective stated. Students from Pedagogical Sciences faculties should have the necessary professional competences so as to influence on the scholars' comprehensive formation through the study of the different subjects of the curriculum, taking into account the recent results from the pedagogical sciences. [3]

The development of the oral communicative competence in the professionals from educational field constitutes an essential aspect to transmit knowledge, educate on values, to guarantee dynamic interaction among students and professors, and promoting an efficient feedback to establish actions that favor the comprehensive training of this professional.

Regarding this, the aspects addressed by Rodríguez [4] are considered, who defines oral communicative competence as the integration of linguistic and extralinguistic capacities, knowledge, skills and habits that are revealed during the communicative act in the foreign language through the appropriate use of this as an essential vehicle to lead the direction of the teaching-learning process, with adjustments to the peculiarities of the English language for such endeavor, in accordance with the individual and collective needs of students and their own possibilities.

In the history of the development of the oral communicative competence in the teaching of English as a foreign language, the use of technological devices has constituted a potential aspect. The use of technology in the students' training process helps significantly due to the importance it has got

nowadays, through them lot of competences can be developed, so professor should teach them how to manage resources to contribute to the fulfillment of the main goals of the initial training process. [5]

In the pedagogical reality of Foreign Languages Major in Sancti Spiritus, the development of the oral communicative competence is not fully achieved in the desirable level due to the fact that the teaching- learning process of the subjects taught in English is not always planned taking into account the use of technological devices that are within the reach of students.

These devices favor the use of video, still cameras, photography and sound recording; Very useful basic resources not only to strengthen the linguistic skills of students in their daily interaction, but also to enable exchange and connection with people from different English-speaking latitudes, thus making the English teaching-learning process more meaningful and authentic foreign language; aspects that must be taken into consideration for the training of a competent professional in accordance with current social demands.

The described reality shows some scientific precisions to the integration of technology that bases their potentialities in the development of oral communicative competence. Taking into account this, the didactic procedures, based on the integration of the technological devices were elaborated, directed to improve the oral communicative competence in the English language. Consequently, it was vital to conduct the pre-experiment, to implement didactic procedures through the efficient use of technological devices to achieve the success of the students' training process.

The objective of this research was to implement didactic procedures for the development of oral communicative competence in the English language through the efficient use of technological devices.

METHODOLOGY

The current study has a quantitative and qualitative character; a pre-experiment was achieved from September 2018 to July 2019 in Foreign Languages Major from José Martí Pérez University. It was conducted by six professors who taught the Integrated English Practice I and II subjects. The universe was composed of 18 students from first year class, who constitutes the sample, it was intentionally selected.

Professors had a proper methodological preparation for the fulfillment of the proposed goals in the training process of foreign languages students. They had five years of experience working with university students and they clearly understood the importance of developing the oral communicative competence in English language and the role technological devices played on it.

Students showed lack of mastering the vocabulary related to common life topics, pronunciation mistakes mainly final sounds in simple present tense and a lack of coherence and fluency while communicating in the English language, being these aspects the studied indicators. They were motivated for the use of the technological devices, such as, tablets, cell phones, laptops and other kinds of devices as well.

The pre-experiment was organized in four phases with their suitable actions, lessons where observed from Integrated English Practice I and II subjects, professors' methodological meetings were also observed, pedagogical tests and surveys were applied which permitted to obtain the necessary information about the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language and the efficient use of technological devices.

The authoresses took into consideration the essence of each of the phases to analyze the advantages of technological devices as tools for facilitating interaction and communication with native speakers and other communities by enabling them to use language for real purposes and in varied contexts. It provided many opportunities for creativity and interactive teaching as well. For a better stratification of the research, different methods from the theoretical, empirical and statistical levels were used:

From the theoretical level: The historical-logical analysis method permitted to deepen on the evolution and the development of the oral communicative competence in the teaching of English as a foreign language, as well as the way it was treated on the Integrated English Practice I and II lessons. The analysis-synthesis method was applied in different moments of the research process, during the study of the checked bibliography about the development of the oral communicative competence and the use of technological devices as essential tools in the foreign language teaching-learning process.

From the empirical level: The scientific observation was also used to obtain information about the way students behave during the Integrated English Practice I and II lessons. The pedagogical test was also applied to verify the development of the oral communicative competence on the sample selected at the initial and final stages, before and after the application of the didactic procedures suggested. In addition, the survey was used to know about students´ interest to learn English language, and the way they feel incorporating the technological devices into the Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

The review of the guiding documents and the basic textbook Integrated English Practice I was one of the empirical methods used to obtain information about the didactics of this type of lessons.

Form the statistical mathematical: The percentage analysis was applied for the quantitative and qualitative interpretation of the results obtained in the application of the different techniques and instruments.

After putting into practice all these methods from the theoretical, empirical and statistic-mathematical levels, all of them were compared and triangled to obtain a faithful criteria, taking into consideration the descriptive statistics; some limitations were confirmed about the development of the oral communicative competence in foreign languages students who in different occasions feel frustrated in the English language learning process, then professors have pedagogical challenges to be solved through linguistics and pedagogical sciences.

RESULTS

The empirical research methods caused the following results:

Scientific Observation

Ten lessons of Integrated English Practice I and II lessons were observed with the objective of checking if professors had an appropriate use of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language. It was corroborated the professor's insufficient methodological and didactic preparation to fulfill the objective stated. Aspects which greatly changed in the final stage with the advances professors had in the application of the didactic procedures.

Document Review

A revision to the Professional Model of the career showed that only the objective number three and the professional problem number four are related to the development of oral communicative competence in English as a foreign language. The non-integration of oral communicative competence and the use of information and communication technologies, mainly the technological devices (tablets, cell phones and laptops), was also observed.

Survey Analysis

A survey applied on a sample of six professors who taught the Integrated English Practice I and II subjects was essential. It had as objective to diagnose the level of preparation professors had for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language. Professors all understood the importance of developing the oral communicative competence in the English language and the role technological devices played on it.

Pedagogical test analysis

A pedagogical test was applied on 18 students from the first year class of Foreign Languages Major, to determine the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language. Students were asked to speak based on a communicative situation about their daily routine, hobbies, likes and dislikes. The indicators were evaluated in Low, Middle and High:

- mastery of the vocabulary
- pronunciation
- fluency
- coherence

The obtained results in the application of the pedagogical tests showed the level of development of the oral communicative competence in the English language in the initial and final stages and the favorable changes in the studied competence. It was also confirmed the greatest progresses were in the low and middle indicators; it was observed the highest advance in the mastery of vocabulary with 62% and the pronunciation of final sounds of the third person singular in Present tense with 61, 1%; it showed the progress of the oral communicative competence in the studied sample. (Chart 1)

Chart 1 - Quantitative summary results of the initial and final pedagogical test.

Indicators	Initial Diagnosis						Final Diagnosis					
	Low		Middle		High		Low		Middle		High	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Mastery of vocabulary	10	55.5	6	33.3	2	11.1	4	22.2	12	66.2	2	11.1
2. Pronunciation	12	66.6	4	22.2	2	11.1	5	27.7	11	61.1	2	11.1
3. Fluency	14	77.7	2	11.1	2	11.1	8	44.4	8	44.4	2	11.1
4. Coherence	14	77.7	2	11.1	2	11.1	7	38.8	9	50	2	11.1

For the implementation of the didactic procedures four phases were designed, put into practice and evaluated.

The phases proposed were:

1. Phase I. Diagnosis of the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students and the available technological devices.

   ➢ The elaboration of the instruments to diagnose the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students.

   ➢ The study and characterization of the results of the diagnosis to confirm the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students.

   ➢ The study of the available technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students.

   ➢ The determination of the current potentialities professors and students have to fulfill the main goal of the formation process and the students' limitations regarding the oral communicative competence in the English language.

   ➢ The presentation of the obtained results from the diagnosis to professors and students.

2. Phase II. Planning the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   ➢ The study of the goals of the Professional Model of Foreign Languages major and its relationship with the learning goals described on the Integrated English Practice main course.

   ➢ The study of the Integrated English Practice I and II courses for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language with fully participation of the teaching staff.

   ➢ The exchange with students about the role they have to play during the research process taking into account the technological devices they have to fulfill the objective of the research.

- ➢ The presentation of the didactic procedures in workshops meetings to prepare professors how to integrate technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

3. Phase III. Implementation of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ The application of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ The record of the application of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ The carrying out the workshops meetings to have constant feedback about the application of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons to set new goals if they were needed.

4. Phase IV. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ The elaboration of instruments to confirm the effectiveness of the applied didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ The analysis of the obtained results after the application of the didactic procedures for the integration of technological devices for the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons.

   - ➢ Evaluation of the achieved oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students.

The teaching staff clearly understood the significance of developing the oral communicative competence in the English language in foreign languages students and after discussions in workshops meetings about the obtained results in the development of the oral communicative competence through the integration of technological devices, short and long terms goals were set.

The proposal of didactic procedures applied had an integrated character at a time of propitiating the integration between linguistics and pedagogical sciences, it permitted the exchange among students, the searching of new knowledge about social and cultural aspects and the autonomous learning when using technological devices.

The didactic procedures were carried out on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons, they were based on the class profile, students' interest to learn the language that permitted the growth in: mastery of terms to describe daily routine, hobbies, the selection of appropriate phrases and words to express about likes and dislikes, the pronunciation of final sounds, the communication using the necessary pauses, rhythm, intonation and the proper organization of ideas.

Professors planned enjoyable communicative activities to develop oral communicative competence and they selected the appropriate learning strategies to promote the oral communicative competence and the use of the proper technological devices to teach them what, how and why to learn the studied matter, and how to teach what they learned.

From the authoresses' pedagogical research practice, professors had an outstanding role in the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language integrated to the efficient use of technological devices in the Foreign Languages Major.

The integration of the students' scientific and technological knowledge in the formation process and in the teaching learning process acquires a full and dialectic relationship nowadays.

Foreign languages students had a didactic performing, so they could transform the limitations or deficiencies they faced into potentialities for the success in their teaching training practice. [6]

DISCUSSION

The use of technological devices such as tablets, cell phones, laptop and the applications *Zapya* and *Bluetooth* help them to expand their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation and coherence while communicating in the English language.

There is a united criterion about the development of the oral communicative competence in the English language integrated to the use of technology. The authors considered that technology did not replace the great things already happening in the classroom, but it could increase and improve the teaching and learning experience when it used for a specific purpose, [7,8] so better results were achieved with the implementation of didactic procedures to enhance the oral communicative competence in the English language.

The use of technology was a way of increasing students' motivation, engaged them in the communication process but professors should have in mind that all students did not learn the same way so differentiated learning was one of the priorities at a time of planning communicative activities to achieve the learning goals of the academic year.

Technology can help students to contextualize authentic learning opportunities; it benefits students to develop language and literacy skills as they make connections among text, images, video, sound and animation; and encourage students to construct meaning and to make connections to their prior knowledge. [9]

According to Daniel & Cowan [10] the increase in the use of resourceful technology in the classroom, English Language Learners are being given multiple opportunities to collaborate with classmates to complete interactive tasks that make good sense to them and result in language learning.

Making an analysis of the different criteria exposed by some of the researchers of this matter, there is a coincidence on the significance of the use of technologies to encourage oral communicative competence in and out of the English classroom context, to reinforce vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, coherence and to develop logical and critical thinking as well.

CONCLUSIONS

Including the technological devices on Integrated English Practice I and II lessons had a direct positive impact on the development of the oral communicative competence in English in foreign languages students. It allowed the enhancement of a proficient communication, values, the learning of cultural aspects and pedagogical professional competences to manage the teaching-learning process of the English subject as future teachers in the different subsystems of education in Cuba.

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Conflicto de interés

No existe conflicto de interés en esta investigación.

Carta de contribución de autoría

- Hilda Rosa Castillo Izquierdo: Búsqueda de los fundamentos que sustentan el estudio, así como en la implementación y redacción de la metodología y los procedimientos didácticos que se realizaron en las distintas etapas del proceso de la investigación pedagógica.
- Regla Nurelys Espinosa Martínez: Análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de los resultados del estudio, asimismo colaboró en la redacción y revisión de estos.
- Elia Mercedes Fernández Escanaverino: Revisión y corrección lingüística y metodológica del artículo.
- Aimé María Mencía Pentón: Revisión y organización de las referencias bibliográficas en el artículo de acuerdo con los requerimientos de la revista.